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CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Please amend the claims as follows so that a listing of the entire set of pending claims 1-22 is submitted herewith per 37 C.F.R. §1.121.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of selecting a test system in a distributed network environment, comprising the steps of:

determining, at a management server, a target test system description, the target test system description associated with a software test;

receiving, at the management server, the test system description, the test system description associated with a functioning system in the distributed network environment;

comparing, at the management server, the target test system description to a test system descriptions list;

selecting a test system description from the test system descriptions list that matches the target test system description; and

contacting a selected test system, the selected test system associated with the selected test system description.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving, at the management server, the software test associated with the target test system description.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising:

forwarding, from the management server, the software test, to the selected test system; and

executing the software test at the selected test system.

4. (Cancelled)

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5. (Cancelled)
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[4]] 1 further comprising:
adding the test system description to the test system descriptions list.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[4]] 1 further comprising:
communicating with the functioning system at a management agent;
determining at least one characteristic of the functioning system at the
management agent; and
creating the test system description based on the at least one characteristic.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the test system descriptions list
comprises test system descriptions selected from the group consisting of:
descriptions of fully functioning test systems, descriptions of heterogeneous
test systems, descriptions of test systems used to balance a network workload, descriptions of
test systems used during specific usage periods, and descriptions of test systems compatible
with a particular test.

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9. (Currently Amended) Computer program product in a computer usable medium for selecting a test system in a distributed network environment, comprising:
 - means for determining, at a management server, a target test system description, the target test system description associated with a software test;
 - means for receiving, at the management server, the test system description, the test system description associated with a functioning system in the distributed network environment;
 - means for comparing, at the management server, the target test system description to a test system descriptions list;
 - means for selecting a test system description from the test system descriptions list that matches the target test system description; and
 - means for contacting a selected test system, the selected test system associated with the selected test system description.
10. (Original) The product of claim 9 further comprising:
 - means for receiving, at the management server, the software test associated with the target test system description.
11. (Original) The product of claim 10 further comprising:
 - means for forwarding, from the management server, the software test, to the selected test system; and
 - means for executing the software test at the selected test system.
12. (Cancelled)

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13. (Cancelled)
14. (Currently Amended) The product of claim [[12]] 9 further comprising:
means for adding the test system description to the test system descriptions list.
15. (Currently Amended) The product of claim [[12]] 9 further comprising:
means for communicating with the functioning system at a management agent;
means for determining at least one characteristic of the functioning system at the management agent; and
means for creating the test system description based on the at least one characteristic.
16. (Currently Amended) A system for selecting a test system in a distributed network environment, comprising:
means for determining, at a management server, a target test system description, the target test system description associated with a software test;
means for receiving, at the management server, the test system description, the test system description associated with a functioning system in the distributed network environment;
means for comparing, at the management server, the target test system description to a test system descriptions list;
means for selecting a test system description from the test system descriptions list that matches the target test system description; and
means for contacting a selected test system, the selected test system associated with the selected test system description.

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17. (Original) The system of claim 16 further comprising:
means for receiving, at the management server, the software test associated with the target test system description;
means for forwarding, from the management server, the software test, to the selected test system; and
means for executing the software test at the selected test system.
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[18]] 16 further comprising:
means for adding the test system description to the test system descriptions list.
21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[18]] 16 further comprising:
means for communicating with the functioning system at a management agent;
means for determining at least one characteristic of the functioning system at the management agent; and
means for creating the test system description based on the at least one characteristic.